



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## Special Exhibition of Sheffield Plate

**L**AST year the Museum's annual Spring Exhibition centered about the instructive collection of English and American silver. As a parallel to this we are fortunate in being able to show this year an important collection of Sheffield Plate, the greater part lent to the Museum through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Torrey, for an indefinite period. Probably no other private collection of this interesting ware has ever been gathered with more thought or regard to the individual excellence of the pieces and their significance in the history of Sheffield plating. Almost without exception it includes an example of every object ever made in Sheffield plate, from the simple livery buttons of the earliest days of the discovery of the process to the most florid and ornate periods of table service which were in fashion before the old process was superseded by electroplating. The collection is particularly rich in examples of the smaller and earlier pieces, such as snuff-boxes, caddy spoons, knife handles, wine labels and a score of other apparently insignificant things, which are interesting in that they are types to which the earliest craftsmen turned their hands in fashioning objects from the plated copper and silver. The Torrey Collection has been supplemented by pieces borrowed from a few private sources.

It is only necessary to outline briefly here the history of Sheffield Plate. Fortunately detailed accounts of its invention, progress, and decline are available in such works as Bradbury's complete and exhaustive volume; in Mrs. Torrey's book describing her collection, and in a number of other works. Thomas Bolsover, a Sheffield cutler, in 1743 discovered by chance that silver and copper when fused together could be worked as a single metal. Bolsover fused an ingot of copper and an ingot of silver and rolled this into a thin sheet, and found it highly satisfactory for making livery buttons, and his discovery was soon taken up by other smiths and cutlers of Sheffield who applied it to the manufacture of small objects. By Bolsover's invention, it can be readily seen, only one side of the copper sheet was coated with silver; the early workers found it difficult to coat the sheet of copper on both sides with silver, and consequently the backs of the buttons and wine labels, the insides of the hollow pieces, and the bottoms of the few large pieces were all tinned. Not until 1760 did Sheffield come into use as a substitute for all table silver, but from the early fifties on its popularity increased and the trade prospered in a truly surprising manner. Pewter had been the only ware which people of moderate means could afford to use as a substitute for silver, owing to its high price, but with the advent of Sheffield, which had all the qualities and appearances of real silver without its costliness, the pewter plate was quickly superseded. In the next decade the idea of plating the copper on both sides came, and in Sheffield and Birmingham many factories for fashioning



**PATCH-BOXES OF THE BOLSOVER PERIOD**



**COFFEE POT WITH UNIDENTIFIED MARKS, PROBABLY BY M. FENTON & Co.  
TWO-HANDLED CUP, UNIDENTIFIED**



**CREAM AND SUGAR PAILS BY RICHARD MORTON, 1785**  
**SWEETMEAT BASKET BY J. YOUNG & CO., 1783**



**TABLEWARE OF 1800, REEDED SILVER EDGES**

objects sprang up, as well as rolling mills for producing the sheet metal for these factories. The pieces made from 1755 to 1770 are often marked with devices and initials intended to imitate the hall marks on real silver. The form of the objects made in this period are usually flowing in outline and chased with rococo designs.

In the middle period, from 1770 to 1790, the craft reached its height; the designs are purest and the workmanship most satisfactory. The style of the classical revival introduced by the Adam brothers into England is reflected in the Sheffield Plate. The form is graceful, the oval shape seems to predominate, and the ornamentation is restrained. The decoration was produced in a number of ways, sometimes by stamping with finely cut dies, by chasing with an instrument so blunt as not to cut through the silver and so expose the copper, or again by piercing borders or geometric patterns and using blue glass liners to enhance the openwork design. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a marked decline in the excellence of the designs, the decorations become florid and ornate, reflecting, of course, the similar ostentatious products in silver of the late Georgian period. With the advent of electroplating in 1840 Sheffield plating was almost entirely given up; the new process of covering white metal with a light coat of silver was in every way so much cheaper, that the more complicated processes of handling and smithing passed quickly out of general use, although, strangely enough, it is still employed in the manufacture of livery buttons, the first objects ever made of Sheffield.

The Torrey Collection illustrates well all the different stages of the craft outlined above, and many of the modes of decoration popular from time to time and the ingenious ways devised for overcoming the natural limitations, such as concealing the copper exposed at the edges, and "rubbing-in" shields for engraving coats of arms or monograms. There are pieces from the continent where this form of plating was also employed, and an odd little cream pitcher bearing Russian marks.

It seems not improper to suggest here a certain branch of the study of Sheffield Plate which has scarcely been touched upon at all, and which should prove a fertile vein in interest and value. This is, to what extent was Sheffield Plate made in America during the eighteenth century. Mr. E. Alfred Jones, in the *Burlington Magazine* for May, 1917, was perhaps the first to clear the ground for speculation. He brought forth a number of extracts from records and newspapers which show that plated ware, as merchandise, was bought and sold extensively in America. It is natural to assume that some of this may have been made in this country; the colonists were ever ready to adopt trades which were carried on profitably in the European countries. Mr. Jones, therefore, produces further evidence and prints an inventory, dated 1797, of Captain Phineas Bradley, a

New Haven silversmith, which includes not only an entire plated tea service, but among the tools of his shop records a plating-mill. This would seem to point to the probability that Bradley was engaged in the manufacture of Sheffield ware, but the evidence is only circumstantial, and before the truth can be determined more research is required. It would be extremely interesting to prove that much of the pedigreed Sheffield plate in this country (and especially that in the churches of New England, which is remarkably "Colonial" in style), was made by the Colonial craftsmen. We know that the platers of Sheffield and Birmingham were alive to the importance of the Colonial trade and fashioned objects especially to cater to Colonial tastes. Mr. Bradbury calls attention to a number of forms which seem to have been designed solely for the American trade, examples of which even are not found in England. Among these the wine cooler in the form of a tub, which is shown in the Exhibition, and the pair of wire cake-baskets are numbered. S. W. W.

## Further Notes on the Captain Cook Wallpaper

SINCE the publication of the October BULLETIN further information about the Captain Cook Wallpaper has been brought to our notice. It will be remembered that a duplicate series is to be found in the Ham House, Peabody, and now William Allen Smith, Esq., of Portland, Maine, calls our attention to a third example covering the walls of the octagon drawing room of the Ruel Williams Mansion, 74 Cony Street, Augusta. In this set there are twenty panels (although some are in duplicate) and the ones over the fireplace are not in the Museum's series. But the most interesting fact is that a small octavo booklet is still extant, printed at the time the paper was made and describing each panel in detail. The title of this pamphlet reads:

LES SAUVAGES DE LA MER PACIFIQUE TABLEAU  
POUR DECORATION EN PAPIER PEINT  
COMPOSÉ SUR LES DÉCOUVERTES FAITES PAR LES CAPITAINES COOK, DE LA  
PÉROUZE ET AUTRES VOYAGEURS, FORMANT UN PAYSAGE EN  
NUANCE, EXÉCUTE SUR VINGT LÉS OU LARGEUR DE  
PAPIER DE VINGT POUÇES, SUR QUATRE-  
VINGT-DIX DE HAUTEUR.

A. MACON  
DE L'IMPRIMERIE DE MOIROUX, RUE FRANÇHE

AN XIII

DE LA FABRIQUE  
DE JOSEPH DUFOUR  
ET COMPE. Á MACON.

This enables us to date the paper accurately: the thirteenth year of the Republican calendar corresponds to 1803-04; further, we know from information supplied by Mr. Smith that the paper was selected especially for the Ruel Williams Mansion when it was built in 1807. Governor Bowdoin, then Ambassador to France, was a personal friend